

Middlebrook PTA Meeting
January 17, 2019
Conference Room

I. Call to order 9:01am. In attendance were Lisa Finn, Lara Paschalidis, Ginnal Yerrall, Chandra Ring, Kim Hall, Lauren Feltz, Jackie Shaw, Hillary Morrissy, Nicola Davies, Jen Acerra-Markey, Annemarie Aronowitz, Madhavi Sharma Vallabhgusula, Carolyn Lyon, Vanessa Elias.

II. Approval of November 2018 Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve made by Jen Markey; Lara Paschalidis second. Minutes approved.

III. Principal's Report - Lauren Feltz: Annual Geography Bee won by Lukas Koutsoukos won for the 3rd year yesterday. There were several kids with a very impressive showing yesterday. Scholastic Art Awards had four winners. Green House is up and running. Spinach is coming along. We have kids out there working in the green house. Ribbon cutting for the Green House in April with WEF. Relief and joy to have open. MB is coming in on completion of vision of refresh of MB LLC, looking forward to move more into LLC model. Still unsure of timeline to move forward. CM LLC to be completed before MB LLC is. There was a discussion of the Reflections Program and whether or not it makes sense for the PTA to continue offering this program at MB. Art Teachers push Art Awards and timing is similar to Reflections. We have such a small number of kids entering (10-11 last year; smaller this year). This is something CT and National PTA frown on PTA's stopping. Lauren will talk to Susan LaBarbera about making it more prominent next year. Timing is the major issue. Reflections is kicked off in December and projects due in January. This is national timing that we cannot control. Can we run November-December? Depends on timing of theme announcement and supplies. Some of the categories MB doesn't have the facility for (Dance, Photography).

IV. President's Report - Hillary Morrissy: CM asked us to share the cost of Scott Driscoll, April 1, Internet Safety Expert parent presentation. He's talking to CM students during the day. We've been asked to share cost for parents that evening. He's spoken to parents in the past, does presentation on what fake apps are out there to hide another app. Cost is \$1200 so our share would be \$600. Would allow all MB parents to be invited. Apparently there was an issue with a House Party App that triggered this at CM, involving both students at CM and MB. Hillary made a motion to approve \$600 to co-host this with CM. Jen Markey second. Unanimously approved. Concerns are different at different ages, hence targeting this age group. MB is also exploring bringing him in to talk to students. He also has a robust parent section on his website. We have lots of kids under age of 13 at MB on apps that require kids to be 13 to be on. Some of these apps are collecting information on kids that they cannot collect information on without them being 13.

V. Officer Reports:

- A. Membership - Laura Rowley: Reports - As of Jan 15 there were 350 total members (303 parents and 47 teachers). As of Jan 15 Stop & Shop has raised over \$1,300 with 214 cards registered.
- B. Treasurer - Jackie Shaw: To date we have gotten all the monies we were expecting to get in. The school picture money came in at \$5,500 and received a donation last month from the Turnover Shop. Total income this year is \$37,000; about \$6,000 off what we were hoping for. The PTA is still in a good place due to money left over from last year. With money donated to us by the Turnover shop, we are donating \$2,300 to SEPTA to help get up and running. The Turnover Shop is not directly donating to SEPTA, so the other four PTA's are donating a portion of proceeds to SEPTA. In going over the remainder of year and expenses, remaining cash is \$52,000 which is enough money to cover all anticipated expenses as well as fund \$40,000 gifts and grants. This would be far more than in past if we end up approving that much for gifts and grants. Some of shortfall in appeal (\$3,600) and rest is in other areas related to sportswear as how we collected money for sportswear as this year's sales (presales) fell into last years fiscal year. Photos came in about \$700 lower than last year (last year was high). Do not think we'll have a 7th grade fun night. Had some volunteers who have not planned anything. Nobody is looking to fill this role.
- C. Parent at Large - Kim Hall (see attached)
- Lauren Feltz will arrange a brown bag lunch and bring in Trudy Denton if parents want to discuss math changes at MB. Course structure changes will grandfather so will have a larger impact on 5th grade students and younger. Someone from the district will be at the next PTA meeting to discuss these changes as well. These changes will not impact AIM, although goal is eliminate AIM once there isn't a need. There is talk of extending classes like AIM to other buildings. Could turn into a long term small intervention. MB will be doing a robust review of student learning next year and what standards children have achieved mastery on and which they haven't and how to show that on a report card. Will take time to resolve this. Lauren acknowledges that between departments there may not be alignment between what the grades really mean. Our work is to move to thinking about standards kids can and cannot meet. No move towards standards based grading. Staff is very engaged in this. Working on mutual understanding of assessment. If grade becomes simply can child do the skill with independence then other skills (learner habits, work on time) need to be indicated as well. We need one philosophy for all at MB. Our eighth grade teachers are very cognizant of making students ready for HS so working with Chuck Smith and HS administrators need think about what that looks like. There are different schools of thought in terms of grading at secondary levels. We'll need to look at philosophies out there and look at DIRG-A districts as well. Need to ensure we're aligned with HS in terms of messaging making sense. There will need to be a great deal of parent education needed.

Teachers spent first half of year doing a study of aligning with how they grade and does it align with others. They are now looking at standards and what types of assessment

best match those standards. Goal is to have common summative assessments across levels. Instructional coaches could look at work and what it tells us for a group. MB benefits from having fewer teachers teaching same course, but it is complicated work. Staff is having excellent conversations around the book and this work. It is true that sometimes students are getting A's but having trouble with content of course.

VI. Committee Reports:

A. Science Fair: There's a good number of students registered. Good news is WEF approved \$2,000 but hope to be under budget. Hillary came up with cash awards for the students this year instead of checks. T-shirts for students are coming. Still need 3 judges if you have anyone with a science background. Snow date of 1/31/19. Ginna Yerrall spoke on behalf of WEF, saying the WEF Board who has helped finance towards Science Fair is having a challenging time with gift cards for judges. Sharing so that there are no surprises next year if WEF evaluates their donation differently. Judging is broken between 6th and 7-8 grades then broken into categories within those groups.

B. Box Tops -- Running a contest that kicks off Tuesday, Jan 22-Feb 20. Box Tops must be submitted by 3/1/19. Team Leaders will give no homework for winning color.

C. Special Education -- SEPTA Meetings are open and held the first Wednesday of each month at 9:15am in the Clune Center. Open to all parents, especially parents with students on a 504 or IEP. Have 52 members at present (many teachers and admins). Trying to put together a cohesive supportive letter regarding alternative school for next BOE meeting. Between SEPTA and WYC trying to become aware of how important it is to attend BOE meetings to make voices heard. Still building SEPTA Board.

D. WYC -- Class projects 2024 will be kicked off for current 7th graders. Wednesday, February 27 at 12 Noon or 7:30 pm at Comstock there will be information meetings to learn about class projects. The daytime and evening meetings will cover the same things. Julie Lithcott-Haimes spoke in NYC had district staff attended, including Kevin Smith. There are upcoming book clubs on books on her book How To Raise an Adult. The grades 6-12 group has openings but the group for younger grades is full. Will keep wait list for full book club. Large interest in an evening program as well. Race to Nowhere set stage for problem and on February 4 Beyond Measure is screening at 10am and 7pm. This is part of a three part series on communities that have found solutions on issues of achievement culture. On February 25 there will be a community conversation based on these two screenings -- what have we learned, what do we want to do? Will be held in evening.

Let Grow at MB -- Lauren wants bring this to the leadership team to discuss what it would look like to foster independence at MB. Mixed reviews from teachers based on the fact sheet WYC provided. MB struggles a little with some kids doing things they'd love to have supervised. To start in MB without the scaffolding of younger grades does create

some challenges. MB wont push this forward until teachers are ready to stand behind it. The list is about having options to hit kids at all levels. Our kids don't all have these abilities as it hasn't been scaffolded -- we can't just throw kids out there. State lawyer and Rob Cippolla of Wilton Police Department are very interested in partnering with Lauren as a resource on this as well. Committed to partnering in the work, but need find how it looks.

E. 8th grade dinner dance -- Meetings will be held on January 23 @ 7:30pm in Comstock and same meeting January 24 @ 9am in Comstock. Will go over what committee chairs will look like. Wont have firm date until after 4/1 and snow dates and discuss roles. The two potential dates are June 7th and June 14, which is the latest it will go no matter how late we go in the year. Soaring Ahead will be on the night before the last day of school. The latest possible day of school is June 27.

VI. Meeting Adjourned at 10:11am.